

as resulting from general causes ; and its investigation may be considered as affording one of the best means for discovering the nature of these causes.

*Difficulty of determining the Fossil Bones of
Quadrupeds.*

If this study is more satisfactory in its results than that of other fossil remains of animals, it is also beset with more numerous difficulties. Fossil shells usually present themselves in an entire state, and with all the characters requisite for comparing them with their analogous species, preserved in the collections or figured in the works of naturalists. Even fishes present their skeleton more or less entire ; the general form of their body is almost always distinguishable, and most commonly, also, their generic and specific characters, which are drawn from their solid parts. In quadrupeds, on the contrary, even should the skeleton be found entire, it would be difficult to apply to it characters derived, for the most part, from the hair, the colours, and other marks which have disappeared previous to their incrustation. It is even excessively rare to find a fossil skeleton approaching in any considerable degree to a complete state. The strata, for the most part, only contain separate bones, scattered confusedly, and almost always broken, and reduced to fragments ; and